Saving Texas History

The Texas General Land Office
Archives and Records Newsletter
Jerry Patterson, Commissioner
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Map of the Kingdom of Mexico, or New Spain, Louisiana, New England, Carolina, Virginia and Pennsylvania, 1720. *This map, which is currently on display at the Alamo, illustrates how the great, imperial powers of the day coveted control of modern-day Texas.*

Alamo Origins: The Spanish Birth of Texas

by James Harkins, Director of Public Services

An exhibit by the Alamo and Texas General Land Office offers a rare chance to see original Spanish documents dating back to the 1700s, when the mission system in San Antonio was established.

"Alamo Origins: The Spanish Birth of Texas" is on display from September 6 through the end of December. The exhibit—free of charge and open to the public—is considered one of the first, large-scale public exhibits at the Alamo to specifically examine its origins and those of other Spanish missions in Texas.

Continued inside ...

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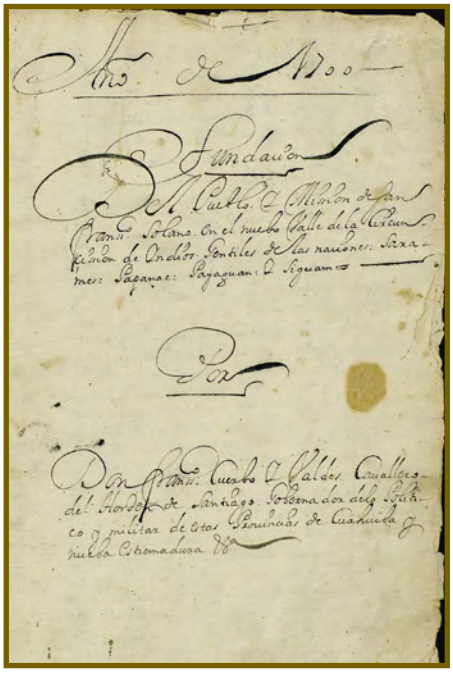
Continued from page 1

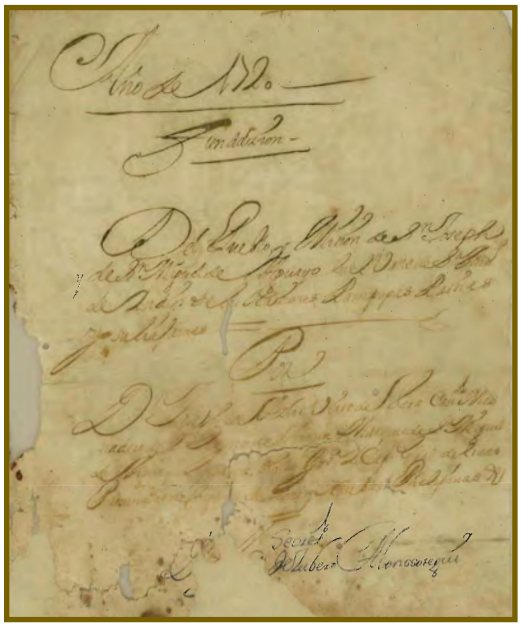
A state of the art display case protects this priceless document—the formal order to establish Mission San José.

This is the first of two exhibits that will highlight the Tejano contribution to Texas and the Alamo. The second installment is slated for the spring of 2014.

For years, the Alamo story has been focused on the Texas Revolution and its Anglo defenders. In contrast, "Alamo Origins: the Spanish Birth of Texas" features 16 original documents in Spanish—with English translations provided—telling the story of the mission's founding, the daily lives of the Native Americans who sought protection there and the eventual secularization, or transfer of ownership, of mission property.



The founding of Mission San Francisco Solano is the seed from which the modern-day city of San Antonio grew. This Order of Establishment and Act of Possession was the first step in building the mission that would later become known as the Alamo. The act signified the transfer of land from the crown to the missionaries and the founding of the mission.



The Founding of Mission San José de San Miguel de Aguayo document is the actual decree authorizing the selection of a site for a mission and grants possession of the land to the Indians.

The 16 documents displayed inside the Alamo were culled from the archival collections of the General Land Office, the Alamo Collection and the Daughters of the Republic of Texas Library. These fragile Spanish maps and documents provide fascinating insight into the missions as frontier outposts vital to the Spanish Empire's control of the region and defense against incursions by the French.

"Alamo Origins: The Spanish Birth of Texas" is open to the public seven days a week from 9 a.m. to 5:30 p.m. through December 31. This exhibit is free of charge. Visitors are asked to be silent and respectful when viewing the documents and no flash photography will be allowed to protect the light-sensitive paper. ✲

page 2

The 4th Annual Save Texas History Symposium

The Alamo: Mission & Myth – Beyond the Battle

by James Harkins, Director of Public Services

The 4th Annual Save Texas History Symposium at the Alamo was a tremendous success. The historic Menger Hotel Ballroom, where the festivities were hosted next door to the Alamo, was packed to capacity with 250+ Texas history scholars, enthusiasts and Alamophiles interested in learning more about the crossroads of Texas history—the Alamo.

Texas Land Commissioner Jerry Patterson speaks to the sold-out crowd.

In line with the goals of the General Land Office when given custodianship of the Alamo in 2011, much time was spent developing a comprehensive history of the mission. Dr. Andres Tijerina said the program was a welcome "sea change" from the narrative that has traditionally been emphasized in regard to the Alamo. Not only was the legendary 1836 battle discussed, but so was life and culture at Mission San Antonio de Valero, the Siege of Bexar, and the U.S. Army period, providing a fairly wide-ranging scope of topics.

Throughout the day, symposium attendees learned about the early history of Mission San Antonio de Valero from some of the leading scholars on the subject. Dr. Tijerina started the day by discussing the Alamo de Parras Flying Company that gave the Alamo its name, while Dr. Frank de la Teja discussed the secularization of Mission San Antonio de Valero, a topic that tied in directly to the exhibit that opened the day before called "Alamo Origins: The Spanish Birth of Texas."

Dr. Gilberto Hinojosa discussed the cultural interactions in the mission system in early San Antonio, focusing on Native Americans who were secularized by the church. Kristi Miller Nichols, from the University of Texas-San Antonio (UTSA) Center for Archaeological Research, took a hands-on approach to history by discussing recent archaeological discoveries that had been made at the Alamo.

Retired Army Colonel Thomas T. Smith discussed the role of the U.S. Army on the Texas frontier, specifically examining its actions in San Antonio and at the Alamo. Among the points made was that the U.S. Army gave the Alamo the iconic hump—instantly recognized across the world, and that the hump may have been styled after architecture found at Mission San Jose, another of the five missions in San Antonio.

Pam Rosser, Alamo Conservator, wearing the white smock, points out frescoes at the Alamo.

Alamo lectures were rounded out by Dr. Alwyn Barr, who discussed the Siege of Bexar in December 1835, and Dr. Stephen Hardin, who discussed seven myths associated with the Alamo in history (see page 5 of this newsletter for a more extensive discussion of Hardin's myths, including two myths that were cut from his presentation due to time constraints).

Over the last four years, the Save Texas History Symposium has featured more than just lectures. This year's

Continued on Page 4

Continued from page 3

symposium, the first held outside of Austin, allowed the Land Office to partner with the Daughters of the Republic of Texas Library for a detailed tour of its holdings, along with battleground and mural/fresco tours on the actual Alamo grounds. Many tour attendees were also able to take history into their own hands by painting frescoes, courtesy of Art In History.

In addition, genealogy was a popular topic of the day. There were two breakout sessions that covered the genealogical resources of the Land Office, including its Spanish Collection, as well as genealogical resources of the Bexar Archives at the Briscoe Center for American History, featuring a lecture by John Wheat, as well as the genealogical resources of the Bexar County Archives by David Carlson, Bexar County Spanish Archivist.

Drs. Frank de la Teja and Stephen Hardin discuss The Alamo: Mission and Myth.

The 4th Annual Save Texas History Symposium was a terrific success that helped the Land Office expand the story of the Alamo, and welcomed a record crowd of Texas history scholars and enthusiasts to learn more about the changes going on everyday at the Alamo.

Thanks to our Symposium Sponsors

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Texas Society of Professional Surveyors

San Antonio Conservation Society

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The Alamo

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and Symposium Exhibitors

Battle of Medina Historical Society, University of Texas Press, TCU Press, San Antonio Genealogical & Historical Society, Washington-on-the Brazos State Park, Bright Sky Press, Texas A&M University Press, Texas Independence Trail, National Park Service, Los Bexarenos Genealogical & Historical Society and TexasTejano.com

Technology Update

The Texas General Land Office is at the forefront of archival scanning and the use of digital technology to provide better access to its collection. Below are four significant projects/milestones worth mentioning:

- About 53.5 percent of files in the Nacogdoches Land District have been scanned as of mid-October. Currently, files for 34 of the 38 land districts are posted on the Land Office website.
- Digital access is now available for active and producing Mineral Files through the Land Grant Database. There are currently 4,247 scanned files that appear online.
- Almost 2,000 additional digital images of Spanish documents were added to the Land Grant Database. These documents are found in the Land Office publication *Catalogue of the Spanish Collection Volume II*. This substantially completes the posting of the entire GLO Spanish Collection online for researchers to search and download.
- Due to a recent upgrade to the Online Map Database, customers are now able to view/zoomify maps in greater detail, even on a mobile device (smartphone, tablet, etc.), which was not possible before.

page 4

The Lost Myths of Dr. Stephen Hardin's Symposium Presentation

Dr. Stephen Hardin prepared an excellent presentation called *Lines in the Soil; Lines on the Soul: The Alamo in Myth and History* for the 4th Annual Save Texas History Symposium. The presentation covered 10 myths associated with the Alamo. Unfortunately, Dr. Hardin was forced to cut his presentation short by two myths due to time constraints, much to the disappointment of the 150+ who attended his session. Here, unedited for the first time, are the two "lost" myths from Dr. Hardin's presentation.

This rendering of Travis' famous "line in the dirt," while inspirational, is probably more legend than fact.

Myth #8

"Our heroes struggled on till they were literally cut to pieces. But not one fell unavenged. . . . The court ran with blood, but the conflict did not cease until every one of the noble band lay a bleeding sacrifice upon his country's altar."
—Anna J. H. Pennybacker

Many still cling to the fiction that Alamo defenders died fighting to the last man. This myth demands too much of human nature. When the tide of battle turns against them, nearly all soldiers succumb to the instinct of self-preservation. The defenders of the Alamo were no exception.

Credible Mexican sources reveal that some of the defenders attempted to surrender. José Enrique de la Peña recalled that during the struggle for the long barracks, a few defenders "poked the points of their bayonets through a hole with a white cloth, the symbol of ceasefire, and some even used their socks." When the Mexican assault troops poured over the north and west walls, as many as eighty defenders sought to escape by bounding through the gun emplacements at the northeast corner of the cattle pen, over the wall of the horse corral, and, finally, over the south wall palisade and through the abatis. Now outside the fort, they ran for cover but lancers commanded by General Joaquín Ramírez y Sesma intercepted them. In his after-battle report, he testified to the escapees' "desperate resistance" and lauded the Texians for selling "their lives at a very high price," but all but one died under the lethal lances. One escapee burrowed deep into the heavy brush and refused all demands to come out. Finally, the cavalrymen shot him where he crouched.

Not just Peña, but several eyewitness Mexican accounts, confirm that soldados took six or seven defenders captive. General Manuel Fernández Castrillón interceded with Santa Anna to spare their lives but, turning on his heel, His Excellency ordered their immediate deaths. Proper soldiers, those who had actually fought in the battle, balked at obeying such a barbarous order. Yet, members of the generalissimo's personal staff who had not taken an active part, drew their swords and hacked the helpless prisoners to pieces. An overwhelming body of evidence maintains that Congressman David Crockett was among these unfortunate defenders murdered at Santa Anna's direct command.

No, the defenders did not fight to the last man. Rather, Santa Anna ordered his soldados to kill them to the last man and therein rests a delicious irony. Had Santa Anna been willing to take prisoners he would have deprived the battle

Continued on Page 6

Continued from page 5

of its moral power; Americans would remember the Alamo only as a terrible debacle; Hollywood would have had no interest in making movies about a military disaster; and we would not be here today to discuss a long forgotten defeat. Whatever mythic mojo the battle contains, it has because it was a last stand. And who was responsible for making sure it was one? Generalissimo Antonio López de Santa Anna. Boy, did he ever screw up!

MYTH 9
In 1836, the Alamo church appeared much as it does now.

In the public imagination, the Alamo church has always looked the same. Consider the following: a late nineteenth-century image depicting the "Storming of the Alamo," a page from *Texas History Movies* (1928), a stock image that appeared in mid-century textbooks, the matte painting portraying the Alamo compound in "Davy Crockett, King of the Wild Frontier" (1954), pages from the Little Golden Book edition of Disney's *Davy Crockett, King of the Wild Frontier* (1955), the Marx Alamo play set, first appeared in 1955, production designer Al Ybarra's take on the church for John Wayne's "The Alamo" (1960), and my personal favorite, the cover illustration of the 1966 Bantam paperback edition of John Myers Myers's *The Alamo*, showing the flag of the Texas Republic (which did not materialize until 1839) and a cowboy who might feel at home on the set of "Rawhide."

All of these representations share two common traits: at least some variation of the arched gable—what most folks call the Alamo "hump"—and the inclusion of the upper windows. Yet, these features did not appear until the U.S. Army took possession of the building between 1850 and 1852. The arched gable was the creation of San Antonio contractors, John Fries and David Russi. The army added a second floor inside the building and cut a pair of windows to provide sunlight. Oddly, after all the care Fries and Russi lavished on the gable, army engineers did not attempt to mirror the Spanish style of the lower windows. Consequently, the army-installed upper windows assumed a utilitarian, even jerry-rigged, appearance. Some found the alterations to the façade repugnant. Lieutenant Edward Everett, who had earlier sketched the church, protested: "I regret to see . . . that tasteless hands have evened off the rough walls, as they were left after the siege, surmounting them with a ridiculous scroll, giving the building the appearance of the headboard of a bedstead."

Remarkably, it was not until John Lee Hancock's 2004 film, "The Alamo," that Hollywood depicted the church without upper windows and the "ridiculous scroll." Production designer Michael Corenblith carefully researched all the post battle sketches and the only existing daguerreotype before the army Taco-Belled it to reproduce an accurate facsimile of the 1836 original. It was an astonishing achievement; he re-created the church—down to the size and shape of the stones in the façade—with absolute fidelity. Nevertheless, Corenblith exasperated many purists when he moved his church forward some eighty feet to "make the icon accessible throughout the plaza, so that the audience understands where they are at all times."

Even so, recent research suggests that even Corenblith got it wrong. Alamo scholar and illustrator Gary Zaboly asserts in his 2011 book *An Altar for Their Sons: The Alamo and the Texas Revolution in Contemporary Newspaper Accounts* that reliance on the post-1836 sketches and the daguerreotype has led historians astray. He argues that Colonel José Juan Sánchez-Navarro's sketch—the only one drawn during the 1836 siege—indicated a completely different roofline from the post-battle illustrations. Zaboly maintains that the large "gouges" that are prevalent in the post-1836 sketches, the 1849 daguerreotype, and consequently the "Corenmo," were—like the so-called "breach" in the north wall—the result of General Andrade's after-battle demolition. During the battle, the western-facing façade of the church was likely more rectangular, with a straight, unbroken, roofline.

Debate concerning the 1836 appearance of the church will continue, but it is certain that the upper windows and the iconic "hump," so frequently represented in popular culture, were absent.

Continued on Page 7

Continued from page 6

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"Myth reflects history—it does not verify it," said Hardin at the end of his presentation. "Myth is an inalienable part of the Alamo story. Even if it were possible, efforts to purge the mythic content would prove unwise. As with Washington and the cherry tree, Travis and the line is a homily that conveys a vital lesson. It is part of a shared national experience and constitutes a valuable cultural touchstone. It will certainly do children no harm to hear it and it may even do them some good." Hardin pointed out that we need to understand and appreciate the myths of the Alamo, and we need to understand and appreciate the historical reality. He urged attendees to graze myth and reality in different pastures, because "hazards arise for both individuals and societies—not when they treasure national myths—but when they begin to mistake those myths for history." ✵

Dr. Stephen Hardin's 10 Myths about the Alamo

1. The defenders were foolish to have defended the Alamo because the fort was of no military significance.
2. Houston ordered the Alamo abandoned; by willfully disobeying this order, the defenders were agents of their own destruction; had they only followed Houston's orders, they could have prevented their annihilation.
3. Alamo defenders "joined together in an immortal pact to give their lives that the spark of freedom might blaze into a roaring flame."
4. "In a voice trembling with emotion, Travis told his men that death was inevitable, and showed that he had detained them thus long, hoping for reinforcements. . . . Drawing his sword, he drew a line in front of his men, and cried: 'Those who wish to die like heroes and patriots come over to me.' There was no hesitation. In a few minutes, every soldier, save one, had crossed. Even the wounded dragged themselves across the fatal mark." —Anna J. H. Pennybacker
5. The thirteen-day Alamo siege bought Houston the "precious time" he needed to raise and train the Texian army.
6. "[An artillery] battery finally brought about what Santa Anna had been trying to accomplish for eleven days. A sizable breach was battered in the east end of the plaza's north wall."
7. "Twice he charged, then blew recall. On the fatal third time, Santa Anna breached the wall and he killed them one and all."
8. "Our heroes struggled on till they were literally cut to pieces. But not one fell unavenged. . . . The court ran with blood, but the conflict did not cease until every one of the noble band lay a bleeding sacrifice upon his country's altar."—Anna J. H. Pennybacker
9. In 1836, the Alamo church appeared much as it does now.
10. Santa Anna commanded an army of liberation, while Alamo defenders, so often lauded as champions of liberty, were nothing more than "mercenaries" and "land pirates" who were fighting to preserve and expand slavery in Texas.

Tell Us About Your Experience at the Land Office Archives

Have you had a good experience with the Texas General Land Office Archives? Maybe you attended a tour or presentation that took your breath away. Or maybe you learned something that you never knew about Texas history. Perhaps you discovered a document that shed some new light on one of your ancestors.

Please Friend Save Texas History on Facebook, and share your experience with us. If you are not on Facebook, please email archives@glo.texas.gov with details about your experience at the Land Office Archives.

The best story about someone's experience with the Archives will appear in the next edition of *Saving Texas History* and will win its writer a free map! ✵

Give the Gift of Texas History for Christmas

Need a Christmas gift for someone interested in Texas history, or for the family genealogist? Do you need a gift for someone who just moved to a new town or for the person who has lived in the same place forever? Maybe a teacher? The Texas General Land Office can help! We have a map for that.

The Land Office has tens of thousands of maps suitable for just about any occasion for a Texan."My family owned land in Brenham for as long as I can remember," said James Harkins, a member of the Archives and Records staff. "A few Christmases ago, I decided to give my grandmother a map of Washington County, where Brenham is located. I was able to locate where our family's land was, and I highlighted the original land survey on the map. I also combined the map with copies of the original land grant paperwork so that the family could see the certificate associated with the land."

"That is a gift that is talked about every year. It was original, and something that no one in the family had ever really thought about. Now the map hangs on the wall in my grandmother's living room, and I get to tell the story at least once every holiday season."

Another gift idea is the 2014 Save Texas History Map Calendar, available for just $5. The calendar features a different map for every month, and an interesting fact for every day of the year. For just $15, you can get the entire set of four "This Week in Texas History" CDs for $15. This Week in Texas History features different stories in Texas history for every week of the year. These are the stories that made Texas great. Remember, calendars and CDs are limited in number, so be sure to order early by calling 512-463-5277 or emailing archives@glo.texas.gov.

Map Spotlight

Bexar County Sketch File 36C

Map #10922

by Alex Chiba, Map Curator

This beautifully drawn surveying sketch documents the tracts of mission land granted to individuals as part of the secularization process begun in 1794 by order of D. Pedro de Nava, Commandante General of the Internal Provinces of New Spain.

Map showing the names of the Original Claimants to the irrigable lands in the Labores of the Missions of Concepción, San José, San Juan and La Espada.

Beginning at the southeast boundary of the "Lower Labor of San Antonio," the map follows the path of the San Antonio River downstream to the "Paso del Oso," along which the missions Concepción, San José, San Juan and La Espada were originally founded and located by grants from the Crown of Spain in the early 1700s. Each mission chapel is spotted on the map and the lands associated with each are color coded to show which missions the lands originally belonged. These mission lands were later granted to individuals as part of the secularization process begun in the late 1700s. This was essentially a movement away from a frontier presence that focused on native conversion to more of an established church presence in the rapidly growing city of San Antonio.

On this map, the mission lands are shown subdivided into parcels and the names of the new grantees are noted within each tract. These grantees typically had some sort of connection to the original mission population and iconic names such as "Navarro" and "Seguin" are included. The process of surveying these parcels would have fallen to the Bexar District Surveyor and indeed it is one former such surveyor, Francois P. Giraud, who provided the bulk of the survey data along with information from the Bexar County Clerk to draw this sketch. Giraud testifies to this fact on the map itself. It's unclear who actually drew this sketch, which is dated June 1874 and bears the endorsement of then Bexar District Surveyor, L. C. Navarro. It's likely that Navarro produced this sketch and submitted it to the General Land Office based upon work by Giraud, who in 1874 was serving as mayor of San Antonio.

In addition to showing the mission land parcels, many roads, trails and arroyos are spotted on this map, indicating an area we know to have been well-travelled and well-populated. Other large original Spanish, Mexican and Republic of Texas grants along the San Antonio River are also noted on this map. The largest, a grant to Padre Gavino Valdez, the pastor of San Antonio at this time, is included and color coded along with the mission lands.

While many of our more famous State or Republic lithographs and County Manuscript maps get most of the attention in our map archive, surveying sketches like these make up the vast majority of our map holdings. As part of our Sketch File collection this map remains an officially filed document and demonstrates that surveying sketches can also be appreciated for their beauty and craftsmanship. The sketch's official name is Bexar County Sketch File 36C and is part of the permanent collection within the Archives of the General Land Office.

A high-quality reproduction is available for just $20 at www.glo.texas.gov/cf/ArcMaps/ArcMapsLookup.cfm.

The Camp Fannin Cultural Resources Collection

by Daniel Alonzo, Digital Archivist

One of the most popular of the "special collections"* preserved by Archives and Records is the Camp Fannin Cultural Resources Collection. For a relatively new resource, its popularity and utility are somewhat surprising. Camp Fannin was a U.S. Army Infantry Replacement Training Center built in 1942. In addition to training infantrymen, the camp included a German POW camp and a Women's Army Corps (WAC) installation, all on about 14,000 acres just northeast of Tyler.

After the war, Camp Fannin became a War Department Processing Center where returning soldiers were discharged from service. When the camp was deactivated in May 1946, "hundreds of the buildings were purchased and moved as entire structures (or disassembled for the building materials), for repurposing as classrooms, gymnasia, or utility buildings not only on dozens of nearby public school and college campuses, but throughout a broad swath of eastern and central Texas."

When the General Land Office began planning the Watkins-Logan Texas State Veterans Home in Tyler in 2010, then Land Office archaeologist Bob Skiles was tasked with compiling a historical background of Camp Fannin in lieu of archaeological work. Preliminary investigation of the 20-acre tract by Skiles and the State Historic Preservation Office found that no archaeological artifacts were likely to exist intact. The report and its supporting research documents, three-dimensional objects and photographs were deposited with Archives and Records by Skiles in late 2011.

While creating an inventory for the special collections in 2012, six panoramic photographs were found of graduating classes of infantry trainees. Panoramic photographs are rare and wonderful. Through their size, they can convey a sense of belonging to those photographed. To the modern viewer the Camp Fannin panoramics convey the enormity of the war effort. Each graduating class had an average of 230 soldiers, and about 800 of these photos were taken (sadly, the Land Office has only six). In addition, Skiles collected more photographs, U.S. Army manuals, films, posters, magazines, maps and newsletters. The collection includes photographs of buildings that were repurposed into school buildings for the nearby town of Winona.

All of this information was incorporated into a "finding aid" and uploaded to the Land Office collection of finding aids at the Texas Archival Resources Online (TARO). Within weeks, inquiries about the collection were received from genealogists nationwide. Some were looking for a photograph of a relative, others simply wanted to know more about the place where their grandfather or relative resided before shipping off to foreign lands.

The Camp Fannin Cultural Resources Report was initiated as a requirement for partial federal funding for the Watkins-Logan Texas State Veterans Home. Ultimately, it became a valuable resource for people researching Camp Fannin.

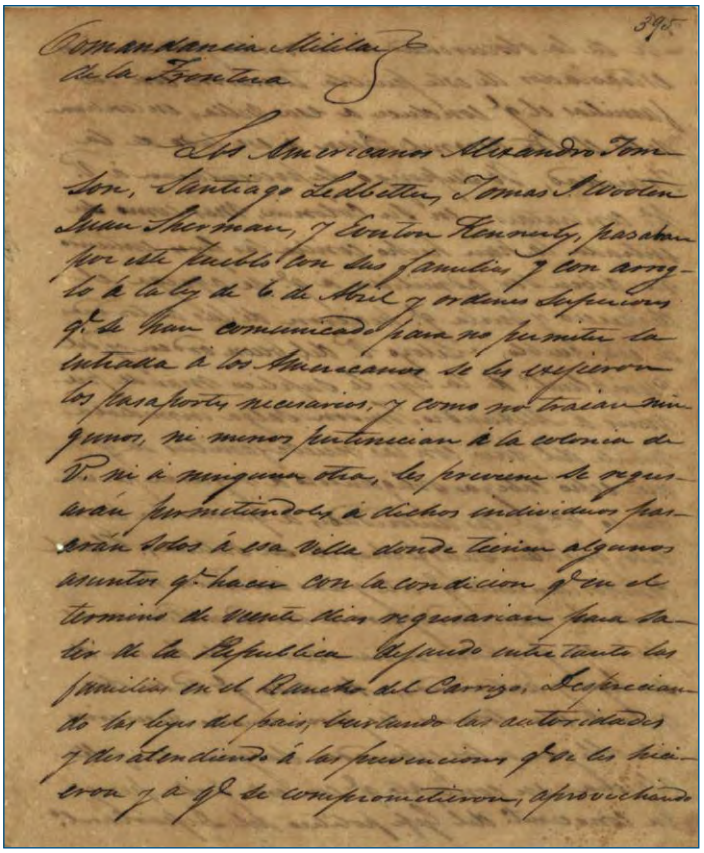
* Special Collections is a term used by archivists and librarians to denote groups of documents that are unique and separate from a larger, primary collection of materials. In the GLO's case, the special collections are those which either were not created by the GLO or are not required by law to be kept by the GLO.

A panoramic photo of a unit that completed training at Camp Fannin near Tyler, Texas.

Relevance in the Classroom

by Buck Cole, K-12 Education Advisor

"What does this have to do with me?" It's a question teachers frequently hear from students introduced to historical topics, and teachers know it's a valid question. Why are they learning about something that happened so long ago? Effective teachers know it's their job to help students make connections to history. It helps if they have access to interesting and useful resources to create a rich learning experience for their students. Fortunately, the Texas General Land Office Archives and Records contains unique, TEKS-connected primary source documents related to Texas and American history that can help capture the attention and imagination of students.



A page from a letter, written in Spanish by Colonel Jose de las Piedras to Stephen F. Austin, complaining about intrusive American immigration into Texas.

So you think the issue of illegal immigration is a recent phenomenon? Hardly. The Spanish Collection, with the oldest documents in the Archives, contains numerous letters of complaint from the Mexican government concerning the apparent lack of respect for Mexican sovereignty from incoming Anglo American settlers. In a passage from one such letter, Mexican Colonel Jose de las Piedras complains to Stephen F. Austin that "the bad conduct of this man and his companions have rendered them unworthy to be admitted into a country into which they had no sooner entered, than they make a mockery of its laws and authorities."[1]

Then as now, the mass influx of people from one country to another has always had an impact on the host country. In this instance, the Mexican authorities were becoming increasingly concerned about Americans blatantly entering Mexican Texas armed, arrogant and without permission. Col. Piedras' letter is a poignant example of the mounting tensions between these two groups. It shows the issue of immigration and its challenges are nothing new to history. Why not use historic letters like this as a springboard for a discussion of immigration in our own time?

In the 1950s, there was a popular television show called "You Were There." The premise was simple: Reporters would interview "historical figures" to enhance the viewer's perspective and understanding of the person and attempt to re-create the times in a new and interesting format. The show was scripted using historical information about the original person, who was portrayed by an actor. Within the Archives collection is a letter from Texas soldier Charles Clough describing Mexican dictator Santa Anna a month after the latter's capture at the Battle of San Jacinto. No script or actor portrayals here ...

"I am happy to say with out regaurd to what publick opinion says that our whole company look up on Santa & his officers as being real gentlemen… Mr Marshall says that he appears more like a business man than a man of extra talent. I think he missed the mark when he told his men that he was the 2nd Napoleon."[2]

Now that's a real "You Were There" moment.

Continued on Page 12

Continued from page 11

What can students learn from this authentic, "you were there" primary source document? Here's a suggestion: After students read and reflect on the passage, provide them with a few questions or have them generate their own. For example:

- Why would Clough and his company think Santa Anna a gentleman?
- Who was Napoleon and what did he have to do with Santa Anna?
- What information may Clough be missing in his opinion of Santa Anna and his men?
- How does this passage support or contradict what we think we know about Santa Anna?

Discuss their answers in class. Ask how this activity reflects the challenges of studying history.

These are just a few examples of how resources available in the Land Office Archives can help answer the question, "What does this have to do with me?" For a copy of these documents please call 512-463-5277 or send an email to archives@glo.texas.gov.

[1] Excerpt of letter from Col. Piedras to Stephen F. Austin, Nov., 1830, Record of Translation of Empresario Contracts, p. 22, Spanish Collection, Archives and Records Program, Texas General Land Office, Austin.

[2] Excerpt of letter of Charles Clough, May 21, 1836, Court of Claims, #1619, Special Collection, Archives and Records, Texas General Land Office, Austin.

In the Classroom—GLO Documents on Display

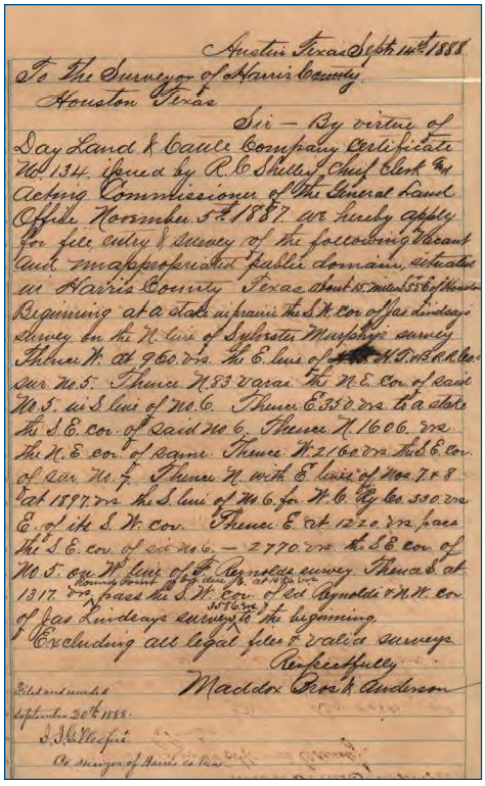
by Buck Cole, K-12 Education Advisor

After Bondy Middle School teacher Susan Hetherington attended a General Land Office Primary Sources Teacher workshop in August, she knew she wanted to introduce her students to Texas land history in an authentic and meaningful way. She learned about the Land Office's GIS system – GISWEB – an interactive mapping application, and its ability to overlay current addresses on original Texas land grants.

Hetherington contacted the Land Office to request copies of the original land grant documents for the area where her school is located in Pasadena. When the documents arrived at the school, she immediately introduced them to her classes. "I showed all of my students the copy of the original land grant and we discussed the history of the land," Hetherington said. "They thought it was interesting and asked lots of questions."

Not satisfied with just showing the original land grant documents, Hetherington had some of her students work on an exhibit to showcase the original land grant for their school's 20th anniversary celebration. The students met before and after school to perform additional research and create the exhibit, which included an explanation of each document.

"They thought it was interesting that there is a place in Austin that keeps all these old records," Hetherington said. She plans to use other primary sources from the Land Office and continue instructing her students in archival research, hopefully sparking a lasting interest in Texas history.



A letter to the Surveyor of Harris County written in 1888 describing the metes and bounds of the original land survey on which Bondy Middle School now sits.

Hetherington should be lauded for her diligence in sharing these resources with her students, and showing them how land history is Texas history.

A Word from the Public

I enjoyed your talk Saturday at the Bayside Historical Society. I followed your advice, went to the Internet, [found] GLO file names and found my 7th generation grandfathers. I called Kevin Klaus gave him the file names and numbers and within a short time he called me back. He found 38 pages of material for me. They are on the way. Why can't the rest of government be as efficient as GLO?

Thanks to you and Kevin I didn't have to call you at your home after all.

—Howard Jones, Rockport, TX

Staff News

El Doctór

Congratulations are due to Dr. José Barragán, GLO Spanish Translator, for defending his dissertation, entitled *The Feet of Commerce: Mule Trains and Transportation in Eighteenth Century New Spain*, through the University of Texas at Austin, Department of History.

Welcome Aboard

The GLO welcomes Jody Edward Ginn, who started in September as the Outreach and Education Team Leader. Ginn is now considered ABD (All But Dissertation) in his quest for a Ph.D. in American History from the University of North Texas. His dissertation topic is titled, *Reckoning in the Redlands: The Texas Rangers' 1935 "Clean-up" of San Augustine*.

The Siege of Bexar

December 1835 and the Alamo is attacked ... by Texans.

This week in Texas History, brought to you by this station and the Save Texas History program of the General Land Office.

December 5, 1835. Outside San Antonio de Bexar. After the skirmish at Gonzales which began the revolution, Texian troops pursued Mexican forces as they retreated to San Antonio.

Mexican General Cos and 570 men sought refuge in the Alamo, and Texans laid siege to the town.

Before dawn on the 5th, 300 Texans launch a surprise attack. The house to house fighting lasts for days.

In the Alamo Cos tries to resist, but dozens of Mexican troops flee. On the ninth, Cos surrenders.

Texans occupy the Alamo.

The Battle of Bexar began 170 years ago, This Week in Texas History.

Hear this at thisweekintexashistory.org